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[Vol. II.]

BIOGRAPHY.

A MALEFACTOR, who was lately executed for stealing a watch out of a shop window, when he was condemned, and left for execution, was much alarmed at his perilous situation, and desired that Mr. —, a godly minister, might be permitted to visit him. This was refused, from the consideration of Mr. —'s being a reputed Methodist. Need I say, how cruel was such a refusal! when even papists are never refused their priest; nor any rank of persons besides denied every spiritual assistance they may require. At length, a serious young man got admission, and was so blest in praying and expounding the scriptures, that the convict was pricked to the heart, and began to cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?" Being questioned, "If he had ever thought seriously of his soul," he said, "That about twenty years ago he had heard a Mr. V—, at H—, which had distressed him for some time, but the impression wore off." Upon being told that Mr. V— was settled in a living within eleven miles, he expressed a great desire of seeing him; and asked, "If he still maintained his former religious sentiments." Upon being answered, "that he did," it seemed both to please and surprise him. Mr V. being apprized of this, immediately set off, and being unknown (I presume) to the keeper, got admission to the prisoner; who, as soon as he recognized him, jumped up from his straw, and embraced him with vast vehemence of cordiality and delight. Mr. V— spent an hour and a half with him, and, before he left him, had the comfort of finding that the Lord had set the prisoner free, and given him to know his pardoning love. This

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was so clearly manifested to his heart, that he said, "He should be glad to proclaim it at his execution:" Which Mr. V— rather encouraged him in, if he felt his heart free, and his spirits were not confused. It pleased the Lord to give his poor servant great composure at the gallows, and he entreated the favour to be heard a few words. He spoke most awfully on the terrors of the law; confessed himself to have broken every commandment according to the spirituality of it; and then sweetly preached Jesus, and his free salvation; in the experimental belief of which he had a good hope through grace, and a most comfortably solid and well-grounded assurance, that so soon as his soul was separate from his body, he should be eternally happy in singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood!" The wonderful simplicity, serenity, and earnestness, with which he delivered it, struck the spectators with a solemnity which riveted their attention. Even the sheriff was so affected with the genuineness of his faith and repentance, that he generously offered to stay the execution for two or three hours, to the utmost limits of his commission. The poor dying thief thanked his benefactor, but he refused the indulgence, as he said, "He had done with all things here below; and longed to be dissolved, and to be with Jesus, which was far better." The executioner was so impressed, that he could not do his duty properly; upon which the poor creature assisted him, by adjusting the cord, and pulling his cap over his eyes; devoutly calling upon Jesus to take him into paradise. His exit was so tranquil, that he never struggled in the least, or was agitated by one convulsive pang. Thus he slept in Jesus, and has left behind him an irrefragable testimony that our Jesus is the friend of sinners, and saves to the uttermost all that are enabled to put their whole trust in his mercy and love, which, like himself, knows neither measure nor end. Hallelujah! Amen! Amen!

MEDITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

On Isa. i. 27.----*"Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness."*

(Concluded from p. 85.)

HITHERTO the words of the prophet have been considered rather in a temporal sense, or as showing how the church is redeemed from temporal or outward evils: but the writer is aware that the explanation already given does not reach

reach the utmost extent of the words; they may be considered as referring to the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ; and perhaps, this is what the Holy Spirit had ultimately in view in them. It is not uncommon in the sacred writings to find spiritual and eternal things taught by things more readily within our comprehension. The final redemption of the church from sin and ruin, is taught by her temporal deliverances. And therefore, though the writer believes that the temporal or outward redemption of the church is what is primarily intended; yet he is not averse from considering the words as pointing out the way or means by which Zion is redeemed in a spiritual and everlasting sense, according to the gospel.

Several of the instances which have been mentioned, as illustrative of the words under consideration, are eminently typical of the redemption by Jesus Christ; and especially the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. That was effected by great and remarkable judgments. And hence if the antitype bear any just resemblance to the type, it is conceived that judgment and righteousness are the means by which Zion and her converts are redeemed from sin and from the wrath to come. Perhaps, therefore, it is not untrue to say, that the execution of righteous judgment is the grand mean of the spiritual and eternal redemption of the church of God.

Mankind are evidently in a state from which they stand in need of redemption. The converts of Zion are naturally in the same awful predicament with other men; and they must all inevitably perish together in their sins, unless God work deliverance and salvation for them. In consequence of the original apostacy, mankind are in a state of finished moral depravity. Their hearts are by nature corrupt, and their ways perverse before God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one. By one man sin entered into the world—and by the disobedience of one many were made sinners. Their carnal minds are enmity against God, and they are holden in the cords of their iniquities.—And in consequence of this universal apostacy, mankind are all condemned by the divine law. They are under the sentence of eternal death, and the wrath of God abideth on them. It is written, “By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” It is written, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

Now from this awful state of sin and condemnation, God does redeem Zion and her converts; and the means by which he does it are judgment and righteousness. To effect the redemption of the church from the evils she is naturally in, and to which she is exposed, God first set forth his own Son, the
 Lord

Lord Jesus Christ, to be a propitiation for sin, for the great purpose of declaring the righteousness of God in the remission of sins, and the justification of them that believe in Jesus.—The Son of God died on the cross a sacrifice for human guilt. He shed his blood to expiate sin; and gave his life for the redemption of the transgressors. The divine law doomed the transgressor to the sufferings of eternal death, and the righteousness of God forbade his deliverance unless an equivalent should be offered, which, in a governmental view, should answer the same purpose as the everlasting destruction of the sinner himself. Righteous judgment against sin must be executed, or sinners cannot be saved. Jesus Christ was the only person in the universe, who could bear the judgment, and offer an equivalent for the sinner's salvation. God, therefore, gave him up to sufferings and death, for the redemption of sinners. He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law. And hence, as the apostle says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Jesus Christ took upon him that suffering which the sinner deserved. He stood in the place of the guilty, and bare the sins of the redeemed in his own body on the tree: as saith the prophet, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.—For the transgression of my people was he stricken.—He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many."

Thus Christ gave his life a ransom for many; even for all the converts of Zion.—He died that they might live. And in his sufferings and death, it is conceived, that the awful judgment of God against iniquity was executed, and his righteousness displayed and vindicated. And though, as it respected Christ, personally, the judgment was not executed upon an enemy of Zion, (which is one point of difference from the types considered) yet as he stood in the place of sinners, and suffered on their behalf, the evils he endured were as real and full a display of the just judgment of God, against sin, as if these evils had fallen on the sinner himself.—Nevertheless, if we please, we may consider the sufferings of Christ as the execution of righteous judgment against the enemies of God and his people. It was early revealed that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. And on the cross this sentence on the serpent was eminently executed. By the death of his Son, God poured out the vials of his wrath on the head of Satan and all his rebellious crew, and rescued the church from his dominion and power. On the cross Christ spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Hence

Hence it is by righteous judgment Zion is redeemed. Without the shedding of blood, even the precious blood of Christ, there could be no remission of sins, nor redemption for the guilty. What he has done and suffered, is a ransom for souls. On the ground of his propitiation believing sinners are delivered from the curse of the divine law, and receive the immunities, privileges and blessings of the sons of God. And on the same ground they are delivered from all their sins and saved from every evil. It is by virtue of the blood of Christ that sinners are created anew, and become the converts of Zion; and by virtue of the same blood they are justified, sanctified and saved. Jesus Christ is made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption to all that are in him by faith. By him the ransomed of the Lord return to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy on their heads. It is written, "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." It is written, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." It is written again, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And again it is written, "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation,—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."—The saints in heaven have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb, and their song is, "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever;" and let all the redeemed of the Lord say—Amen.

JOSEPHUS.

LETTERS ON SOLITARY DEVOTION.

(Continued from p. 57.)

FROM *PASCAL* TO *JULIA*.

LETTER XV.

I DO not know, my dear Julia, that any thing is lost by instituting perfection as our aim in all our lawful transactions. So far as we aim at any thing short of this in our religious concerns, we virtually say of the law, that it is not good. I wish
you

you to make it your object through the whole of your life to manage your devotional duties in as perfect a manner as you can. Though it may not be expected that your mind should be always unincumbered, or that you should have an entire control over your circumstances, yet you should always labour as much as possible to have it so. Ever endeavour to keep your mind in a composed, serene and spiritual frame. Such a frame of soul we should always carry with us into the divine presence. We should if possible live without the burden of inordinate cares; and removed from all objects, which are merely of the world. We should be particularly careful to let none of them intrude upon us when we are with God. What had Moses to do with worldly cares or objects upon the cloudcapt top of Sinai? And how ill must they have become the disciples, when they were with Jesus in his transfiguration? Whenever we pray to God, the mind should be wholly withdrawn from every other concern. We should be completely absorbed in our duty, and the infinitude of his glory. Nothing can be more burdensome to a pious person, in seasons of devotion, than obtrusive cares; unless it be those horrid suggestions and imaginations, which the enemy of our peace seems to be sometimes suffered to inject into our minds. Cares dissipate the mind; and, like the dead flies which spoil the precious ointment, ruin the spirit and the pleasures of devotion. That you may not be harassed in this way, aim, in your constant habits, to live as free from worldly vexations as possible. Wish not for much which goes readily in the market of the world. Live above the world while you are in it. Let your conversation be in heaven. If you yield to the demands of the world in your general habits, depend upon it, my dear Julia, you will have very intrusive visitors in your social prayers and in your retirements. Happy indeed it is to have life run on in one even tenour. Happy to have our faces always Zionward. As we are creatures of habit, and are very apt to neglect that which does not occur to us under this influence, I would recommend it to you to appropriate certain portions of your time for prayer. The morning and the evening are natural and convenient seasons. Order and regularity in this, as in every thing else, you will find a material advantage. Spend not so much time in these exercises as to waste your strength, or neglect other duties of equal importance: but at the same time, be guarded against stinting yourself in these best of all engagements. When you shall have established your rules, be careful that you do not wantonly violate them. Let your resolution and perseverance be inflexible, and superior to every sollicitation.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

MY DEAR JULIA,

IN my last I cautioned you against worldly mindedness, and vexatious cares. I advised you to sequester certain portions of your time for the regular and unincumbered discharge of the duties of devotion, and to abide inflexibly by the system you should adopt. This may in some cases be nearly impossible. Company may be with you, from whom it may be very impolite to break away. And I do not think it is necessary that you should forfeit your politeness in order to be a Christian. Some other inevitable personal or domestic duties may detain you. Circumstances may be wholly inopportune. With every such interruption I advise you to contend as far as you consistently can. You remember the excellent example of Col. Gardiner, who, as his biographer Dr. Doddridge informs us, when he suspected beforehand that he should be obliged to march with his troops, or perform some duty of his office at an early moment, made it a point to rise so early, as to have an hour previously to employ in his devotions. If we imitated such examples more closely, should we not probably have richer anticipations of the heavenly glory? "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." But under certain circumstances it may be difficult, if not impossible, to adopt such expedients. In which case substitute by all means ejaculatory prayer. Lift your heart in silent desires to God. Like Hannah, commune with him in the hidden retirements of the soul. This may be done at any time, in all circumstances, in the midst of company; and when you are seemingly engaged in services quite inconsistent with worship. This is a blessed alternative which we cannot prize too much. The duty of prayer may in this way be as faithfully, as acceptably, and as consolingly performed, as in the external manner of it. But beware that you do not become habitually satisfied with this mode. See that you do not induce careless habits, so as to omit the more advantageous manner of being in your retirements when you can, and nothing hinders but a criminal indifference. My friendly regard to your felicity dictates these advices. They will, I am confident, be duly considered.

I am, &c.

LETTER XVII.

MY DEAR JULIA,

YOUR last letter, which was handed me the other day by our common friend, S. H. strengthens, rather than weakens, as you say it must do, my confidence in you, as a real subject

ject of grace. For the degree of darkness and despondency of which you complain, is by no means peculiar to you. Thus good people all vibrate from light to darkness, from joy to sorrow. Desertion is the lot, more or less, of all the friends of God. Through the augmented strength of some remaining corruption, some nervous debility of body, which often brings gloominess over the mind, or some temporary advantage which Satan in other respects may have gotten against them, all the Lord's people have seasons of depression. In these seasons their spiritual comforts are much diminished. Spiritual pride is very apt to insinuate itself, when our joys in God are great and long continued. This must be mortified. We need to be much of our time under discipline to learn fully our depravity, and our dependence. Reason teaches us that we are entirely dependent. But we must learn it also by feeling and experience: you do well not to attribute your sadness of mind to any change or defect of goodness in God, but to your own great wickedness of heart. This, in all probability, is the chief, perhaps the sole reason of it. You are now in a profitable school. You are led to a more perfect understanding of some parts of the Scriptures than you could possibly obtain without this sort of experience. You now understand, I dare say, more perfectly than you ever did before, the pensive language of Job, "I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him." This is very much your own case. It is a sad one, but you will not, I hope, be sunk too much, or be induced to intermit your devotional exercises at all on this account. You are now on a precipice; beware that you do not fall. In your letter some things are said, which intimate, perhaps undesignedly, that you are under no small temptation from the present state of your mind, to omit, or at least to allow yourself to be less diligent in the duties of devotion. This is a temptation, to which, if it exist, you must by no means yield. It does not follow, that it is not your duty to pray, or that your prayers are not acceptable with God, because you do not enjoy that freedom and nearness to him which are so desirable to you. If your present darkness proved you to be a hypocrite, destitute entirely of all friendship to the blessed God, it would follow indeed, that your prayers are not the performance of any duty. And God forbid that I should encourage hypocritical acts in any one. It is no mark of friendship to do so. But this does not appear to be your case. Your present feelings are no proof of it. They prove that you are imperfect, and guilty; and have you ever been otherways? Your best frames, you know, have not
been

been without a mixture of sin. It is possible that your prayers may be now as acceptable to God, as they were in moments of greater enjoyment. Your heavenly Father probably would teach you the worth of his favour by a painful sense of the want of it; and your danger, by the distress into which a partial backsliding brings you. But suppose it were true, that you are a hypocrite, destitute entirely of real goodness, does it follow that you ought not to begin to pray? Duty does not depend at all upon our disposition to perform it. Obligation is prior to the consideration of our actual obedience or disobedience. The law determines what our disposition should be. Our disposition does not constitute the law. We ought not to be destitute of love to so great and good a being as God is, one moment. We ought not to be the subjects of any moral incapacity to pray to him sincerely, and acceptably. Though we have acted the part of the enemy and the hypocrite to this time, it is now our duty to return to him with all our hearts, in the spirit of penitent, and believing prayer. Suppose then, as you say, that you have no love to God in your heart, no consideration is thence furnished which ought to induce you to remain a hypocrite. But I hope your sorrows are not the sorrows of a totally hardened, and unyielding heart. Your sighs are not those of an enemy, but of a friend. They do not arise primarily from the dread of deserved punishment, but from the absence of your best beloved. You call upon him, but he seems to give you no answer. Such a grief as that which you express will be the natural consequence in a pious mind, of so great a loss as that of the sensible presence of God; and it indicates that God is really your supreme good. The loss of that which we love most, will inevitably produce in us grief of mind. Be not then discouraged. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will yet draw nigh to you. Be resolved and persevering. Wrestle like Jacob. Give him no rest till he return, and reveal himself in your heart. Lie at his feet in all the humbleness of spiritual poverty. Yield not to any misgivings or reluctance of heart, with respect to the duty of prayer. If you do not get your reward in it as you have done, be willing to work without wages. In imitation of the Father of the faithful, hope against hope. When God has tried you as much as he sees meet, I trust you will come forth as gold. Though for a small moment he may have forsaken you, with great mercies will he gather you. Though in a little wrath he may have hid his face from you, for a moment, yet with everlasting kindness, he will have mercy on you. But allowing that those sweet moments of refreshing from the presence of the Lord were never to return to that degree, which in some past seasons you have experienced, still the

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open path of duty must be followed. We must not make our own enjoyments, but the precepts of the gospel, the rule of our conduct. The heroic efforts of faith will rise superior to internal, as well as to external impediments. Often

*Virtue shines brightest in affliction's night,
And shows in darkness beams of hope.*

I cannot think of your faltering under any discouragement, in that course of vigorous piety on which you have entered, apparently with so much engagedness. I remain, my dear Julia, with growing concern for your everlasting welfare,
Yours, &c.

(To be continued.)

TO THE EDITORS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.

GENTLEMEN,

If the following thoughts are, in your opinion, worthy of a place in your useful Magazine, by inserting them, you will encourage a correspondent to submit some other pieces to your inspection.

A DENIAL OF THE DIVINE DECREES LEADS TO FATALISM.

IT is not uncommon for those, who deny the doctrine of the universal decrees of God, to charge those who believe that he foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, as holding to fatalism; and consequently as being fatalists. This is used as a term of reproach, at which the minds of many are apt to revolt, and therefore it is believed, that this opprobrious charge has had great influence upon many, and led them to reject the salutary doctrine of God's universal decrees. It is the usual practice with disputers and controversial writers to retort, if possible, the arguments and charges of their opponents, and thus to confound them with their own weapons. The writer of this does not recollect of ever reading or hearing any thing, in which a retort of this charge has been attempted. It is conceived, however, not to be a very difficult, nor even undesirable task to turn back the imputation of fatalism upon those who deny the doctrine of God's sovereign, holy, and universal decrees.—Let it then be asserted, that *all those who deny the decrees of God are fatalists*; and then see if what follows does not support the assertion. What is meant by the universal decrees of God, is not difficult to understand. They are his *eternal purpose*, according

to the counsel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass. God's efficient will, or determination, which gives being to all creatures, things, and events throughout the universe, is his decree. What is meant by fate is, perhaps, more difficult to be clearly understood. There are several senses in which the word fate is used; but that which is most common is hardly definable. It seems, however, to import some unknown, unintelligent, undescribable, and eternal *destiny*, by which all things are unalterably fixed in an absolutely necessary chain of causes and effects.—This fate, according to the ancient stoics, was superior to all the heathen gods, who were subject to its decrees. Even omnipotent Jupiter, with all his potent council, could not alter or control the events fixed by this superior destiny. This is the most intelligible view the writer can give of fate.

Now to prove, that they who deny the universal decrees of God are fatalists, we need only the use of this self-evident position, viz. *every event must be the effect of an efficient cause*. This is a fundamental principle of all just reasoning. The whole universe must have an adequate efficient cause of its existence. All the things in the universe must have an efficient cause, which gave them their being and form; and all events, of every nature and kind, must have a primary cause, by whose efficiency they are produced in their time, place, and manner. This, it seems, is true, beyond all reasonable doubt. Now let the inquiry be made, What is this primary efficient cause of all things? To what are we to ascribe the existence of things and events? Is it to be ascribed to the decree of God? Or is fate their cause? It must be one or the other of these; for no third efficient is conceivable or possible. They who believe the doctrine of decrees have no hesitancy in answering, that the decrees of God are the primary cause of all things; and that their efficiency pervades the universe, giving existence, form and issue to all beings, and to whatsoever comes to pass. But to what cause will the deniers of divine decrees ascribe the being of events and things? They cannot ascribe it to God, or to his decrees, for the existence of these they deny, and there being no other possible efficient in the universe, they must ascribe all things to fate as their cause. Hence a denial of God's universal decrees, naturally and directly leads to fatalism, and therefore all such deniers are absolute fatalists. Q. E. D.

The writer of this does not perceive why the above reasoning is not complete and full demonstration of the point in hand. If the position upon which it is grounded be not true, then there is an end to all safe and just reasoning from cause to effect, or from an effect to its cause; consequently, the things that are made are no certain evidence of the existence, eternal power,

power, and godhead of the Creator ; but all things are uncertain, and nothing can be known. If any thing can exist, or event take place, without an adequate efficient cause, then it must either give itself being, that is, be its own creator, which is absurd, or be eternal, or what amounts to nearly the same thing, be resolved into an eternal and immutable series of necessary causes and effects, which excludes the being and government of God from the universe, and thus leads to atheism and fatality. If it should be said, that the decrees of God give being to *some* things, but not to *all*, then those things which are not included in the decree, must be ascribed to fate as their proper cause. And thus we have two supreme efficient beings at the head of the universe, God and fate, than which nothing can be more contradictory and absurd. At best, such an idea is a partial fatality, which has no perceivable preference to that which is total.

If the above reasoning be just, then we may easily see the great advantages which the Calvinistic doctrine of universal decrees has over the Arminian denial. Calvinists have a God at the head of the universe—an intelligent, wise and holy Being, who has established a perfect plan of operation, and is conducting all things by his providence according to design ; or as an apostle of Jesus Christ expresses it, “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,” to accomplish the glorious purposes of infinite wisdom and goodness. And thus they have a broad and solid foundation for the unceasing exercise of all the pious and holy affections required in the word of God. But Arminians, by denying the doctrine of decrees, subject the universe to the direction of a blind undesigning destiny or fate, which removes all the foundations of piety or true religion, leads to a denial of the divine government, supremacy and existence ; totally annihilates the moral agency and accountability of man, and renders our immortality extremely uncertain.—It is painful to contemplate all the impieties, absurdities and horrors to which a denial of divine decrees has a direct and inevitable tendency. There appears to be no consistent medium between the doctrine of universal decrees, and absolute fatality and atheism.—Query, Can he who, *understandingly*, rejects the doctrine of God’s sovereign and universal decrees, be possessed of any true religion ?

JOSEPHUS,

EXTRACT

EXTRACT

From the Journal of Mr. PAUL COUCH, Missionary, District of Maine.

I HAVE been engaged 19 weeks in the service of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. Rode 706 miles. Preached 116 Sermons. Made 63 family visits. Attended 2 funerals. Visited 7 sick persons. Attended 4 conferences; and 2 church meetings. Received 7 dolls. 50 cents, for the benefit of the Society.

“I have endeavoured to do what I could to promote the benevolent objects of the Society; and thereby advance the glorious cause of Christ. And if my health and strength would have allowed, I should have gladly done more. But I have reason to believe that God, in his abundant goodness, has aided my feeble endeavours, so far as to make them influential, in public and private, for the awakening of a number of souls, in different places, who, I have reason to hope, have been brought to the saving knowledge of the truth. Notwithstanding the divided state of a number of societies in this part of the Missionary field, yet the prospect, in several places, seems to be brightening; and the call is great for faithful labourers. Missionary exertions are much needed. I found the people, in general, very ready to attend meetings, and expressed their thanks to the Missionary Society for their attention to them. I have found more or less, in almost every place I visited, those who appeared to be the dear children of God; whose souls appear to be much refreshed when they hear the truth. It was with difficulty that I parted with the people, in some places, while they with much affection requested me to stay longer, or to visit them again. If any good has been done by my feeble efforts, while in the service of the Society, God must have all the glory; and I shall esteem it a privilege, from the dust of humility, to praise him.”

THE WICKED DISPLEASED WITH THE GOSPEL.

MY object, in the following essay, is to illustrate this proposition, viz. The wicked are exceedingly displeased with the gospel of Christ. I shall

- I. Attempt to prove this general proposition.
- II. Inquire into the grounds, or reasons of it.

The conduct of mankind is, commonly, the best expositor of their hearts. We have therefore an undoubted right to conclude,

clude, that men dislike those objects which they may obtain without any expense or difficulty, provided they intentionally reject them. This being premised, we proceed to prove, that mankind, in an impenitent state, are displeased with the gospel of Christ. That this is the case appears,

1. From the consideration that the gospel has spread over so small a part of the world.

It is well known to those, who have any considerable knowledge of the nations of the earth, that but a small proportion of them have embraced the gospel. This was the case during the former dispensation. The Jews were the covenant people of God. To them his mind and will were communicated by special revelation, and to them the gospel was as really preached, as in the days of Christ and his apostles, and they professed to receive it as divine truth. They, however, composed but a very small part of the world. All other nations were highly prejudiced against the religion of the Jews, and enveloped in pagan darkness. They lived in the constant practice of the grossest idolatry. This was their deplorable situation from the days of Abraham to the days of Christ. ~~And it was a situa-~~ tion with which they were well pleased. They preferred darkness to light, fiction to reality, error to truth. Hence, "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools; and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and to creeping things." Had not the Gentile nations preferred the darkness of paganism to the religion of the Jews, they would have forsaken the former, and embraced the latter, especially those who lived in their neighbourhood; for the Jews never rejected those who became proselytes to their religion. Hence, their persevering attachment to idolatry affords plenary evidence, that they were displeased with the worship of the true God.

When the Saviour made his appearance in this world, and entered on his public ministry, he published the glad tidings of salvation, and spake as never man spake. The fame of his preaching and miracles spread far and wide. But few, however, were disposed to embrace his gospel. "He was despised and rejected of men." In the days of the apostles the gospel was more extensively propagated. They travelled from city to city, and from nation to nation, with the gospel of reconciliation on their lips, and were instrumental of establishing many churches. And the influence of Christianity, aided by the mighty power of God, greatly prevailed. But this happy season was soon succeeded by one of the most dark and distressing periods

periods which the Christian church has ever seen. For many centuries but few could be found, who embraced the pure, unadulterated doctrines of Christianity. This was the case until the memorable reformation. From that period, the gospel was more generally diffused. It has been extended, however, but to a very small part of the world. A late writer has observed, "If we divide the known countries of the world into thirty equal parts, five of them will be Christians, six Mahomedans, and nineteen Pagans!" It is evident from this calculation, that by far the greater part of the world is now destitute of the gospel. But why is this the case? Is it because it is *naturally* impossible for them to obtain it? With regard to many pagan nations, this is not the reason why they are now destitute of the gospel; for it has often been carried to them, and great exertions have been made to persuade them to embrace it; but every effort used to propagate Christianity among modern heathen nations, a few instances excepted, has hitherto proved unsuccessful. They have discovered an utter unwillingness to come to the light of the gospel, and a very great inveteracy against it. They have not only rejected missionaries, who have gone to them with the glad tidings of salvation on their lips, but they have often treated them with great inhumanity, and sometimes barbarously massacred them, for no other reason, than because they wished to spread the knowledge of Christ among them. How can these things be consistently accounted for, but upon the general principle, that the gospel is displeasing to the impenitent heart? Had the nations of the earth been diligently seeking after truth, and disposed to embrace it, they would long since have discovered and gratefully received that glorious light, with which our divine Redeemer has irradiated the world. The consideration, therefore, that the gospel has spread over so small a part of the world, affords convincing evidence that mankind are *naturally* displeased with the gospel.

2. The gospel, or the religion of the Bible, has been rejected by many among those nations, where it has spread and been constantly enjoyed.

This was the case among the Jews. How often did they revolt from the service of the true God, and adopt the idolatrous practices of the heathen. God raised up prophets and teachers among them, who predicted the character and coming of the Messiah, and pointed out the way of salvation by him. But notwithstanding all the instruction with which they were favoured, they were a stiff-necked, rebellious people. They not only rejected the messages of the Lord by his prophets, but even put them to death.

Nor

Nor did the preaching of Christ himself reconcile them to the truth. Many of them reproached him as a vile impostor, and even accused him of acting in confederacy with Satan. Such was their aversion from his character and the doctrines which he taught, that they finally combined against him, and imbrued their hands in his blood. Who can read the doctrines which our Lord taught the Jews, and the history of their conduct towards him, and remain unconvinced that they were highly displeased both with him and his preaching? "He came unto his own, but his own received him not." The Jews, as long as they entertained false ideas of his character, supposing that he came to deliver them from Roman bondage, and erect a splendid kingdom in this world, in which they should be elevated, treated him with great respect; but the moment they found that his kingdom was not of this world, and discovered his true character, their respect was turned into outrage and contempt. Instead of shouting, Hosanna to the Son of David, and calling him, Rabbi, Rabbi, the air resounded with the malignant cry, Crucify him, crucify him! Away with him! He is not fit to live! They requested that a robber and murderer might be released, rather than the immaculate Jesus. If the conduct of men can afford evidence of their real character, we have a right to conclude, that the hearts of the Jews were totally displeased with Christ and his gospel.

And do not mankind, at the present day, give very clear evidence that these objects are not less displeasing to them than they were to the Jews? Is not the whole volume of inspiration totally rejected by many, and represented as nothing more than a cunningly devised fable? Are not all possible efforts used to bring it into general contempt, and to prevent mankind from receiving it as a system of divine truth? The warmest advocates for Christianity have discovered but little zeal in defending and propagating the gospel, compared with what others have done in reproaching it, and opposing its progress. Hosts of infidel writers have appeared in almost every age of the church, especially in the present, who have used every possible mean within their reach, to counteract the salutary influence of Christianity, and to brand its Author and doctrines with indelible disgrace. The close of the eighteenth century has produced the unprecedented phenomenon, a nation of infidels born in a day. But why all this zeal, this inveteracy against Christianity, if men are naturally pleased with it? To suppose, that those who thus reject and reproach it, are its friends, is the grossest contradiction. Their conduct undeniably proves that their hearts are opposed to Christ and his gospel.

3. Another

3. Another argument to prove that mankind are displeased with the gospel, may be drawn from the consideration that many, who profess to believe it, reject its most distinguishing doctrines.

When the gospel is construed in a way consistent with the feelings of the selfish heart, they are highly pleased with it; but when its genuine meaning is displayed, it excites disgust and opposition. Nothing is more common than for mankind to contend with the doctrines of total depravity, regeneration by the special influences of the Holy Spirit, disinterested benevolence, personal election to eternal life, final reprobation, unconditional decrees and submission, and endless punishment. But these we consider as some of the most distinguishing and essential doctrines of the Christian system. Separate these doctrines from the Bible, and it will retain but very little, if any thing, superior to the writings of heathen moralists; it must lose all evidence of its real divinity. This being the case, it follows, that those, who reject the doctrines abovementioned, do actually reject the gospel; and those who are displeased with these doctrines, are displeased with the gospel.

4. That the wicked are displeased with the gospel further appears from the violent persecutions which its advocates have suffered. We are not prone to persecute others for espousing and propagating opinions, with which we ourselves are pleased. This is never the case in things, either of a political or religious nature. But we are always pleased, when our own opinions prevail, and obtain credit in the world. This being the case, why has the church of Christ been subjected to such repeated, and, in point of severity, unequalled persecutions, for believing, and using means to spread, the doctrines of his gospel? That they have suffered repeated and violent persecutions for these reasons, is a fact too notorious to need proof. Nor can we account for the conduct of their persecutors, but by supposing that they were much displeased with the doctrines of the gospel.

5. That the wicked, or mankind in an impenitent state, are displeased with the gospel, appears undeniably evident from the circumstance of their omitting to comply with its requisitions. That the human species have all the powers necessary to moral agency, we infer from the consideration, that they are viewed by him, with whom is no unrighteousness, as under moral obligation, fit subjects of moral government, and criminal for not complying with moral precept. God actually treats them as rational, moral, and accountable creatures. He considers them as capable of *perceiving*, of being *pleased* and *displeased* with moral objects, capable of a *voluntary compliance* with, and of a *voluntary omission* of the requisitions of the gospel; ca-

pable of exercising repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and capable of performing every duty which the gospel enjoins. Since mankind are thus capable of performing, and are expressly required by their Creator to perform, these duties, those who live in the continual omission of them, afford infallible evidence that their hearts are displeased with the requirements. This however is the case with all the impenitent. By this we do not mean to deny that the impenitent may perform those *external actions* which the gospel requires. But since it is the *heart*, which, in the sight of God, gives to men their moral character, we cannot admit that the impenitent sinner ever did, or so long as he continues impenitent, ever will, perform any duty in the sense of the gospel. To say that the wicked, or impenitent, *while such*, perform any duty in the sense of the gospel, is to deny that there is any specific difference between the saint and the sinner; indeed it amounts to a denial of the necessity of regeneration, and involves the doctrine of universal salvation. For the promises of the gospel extend to the smallest degree of right affection, and insure growth in grace and final salvation to him, who has ever performed one duty acceptably, be it ever so small. "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. He that giveth a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose a disciple's reward." Hence to be consistent with ourselves, we must either admit the doctrine of universal salvation, or acknowledge, that the impenitent, as such, never perform any duty in the sense of the gospel. And since they are furnished with all the powers necessary to moral action, since they know, or may know, their duty, and are urged to the performance by the most weighty motives and arguments which infinite wisdom can propose, but continually omit it, the conclusion is, the taste or temper of mind, of which they are naturally possessed, is utterly displeased with, and opposed to the things of the gospel. This aversion is not peculiar to the profligate sinner, but extends to the self-righteous moralist, and indeed to every class of men in an impenitent state. Of such "There is none righteous; they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one." They hate the light, and are unwilling to come to it.

6. That mankind, in an impenitent state, are displeased with the gospel, appears from the necessity of regeneration to reconcile them to the gospel, and from the necessity of divine influences to effect this change. Unless the hearts of men, in their natural state, are displeased with the things of God, we can see no need of a change in order to their being reconciled to them. It is totally unnecessary that the heart of your friend should

should undergo any alteration, in order to reconcile him to you and make him your friend. Any specific alteration in his feelings towards you would render him your enemy. So long as he is your friend, it is impossible that he should be reconciled to you ; for reconciliation, in all cases, implies previous dislike, or opposition. But does not the gospel call on sinners to be reconciled to God, and to the precepts and doctrines of his word ? And does it not represent this reconciliation as implying a real change of heart ? If so, the hearts of men, antecedent to this change, are hostile to these objects. Again ; does not the gospel make it evident that the change now under consideration, is effected by supernatural influences ? "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is evident from these and a multitude of other texts of similar import, that special divine influences are necessary to reconcile the hearts of men to the great truths of the gospel. But such influences would not be necessary were not the hearts of mankind, in their natural state, displeased with, and opposed to the gospel of Christ.

[*To be continued.*]

EXTRACT

Of a Letter from Mr. A. Farley to Rev. Mr. Smith, of Hollis.

HEBRON, N. Y. June 18, 1804.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"I am now in Hebron, in the state of New-York. I preached here the last Sabbath to a full and very solemn assembly ; and after meeting attended a very agreeable conference. It is a time of special attention. I have the satisfaction to inform you that God is doing great things for the people in this quarter. This place I am informed, a year ago, was extremely vicious and dissolute, paid little attention to the sabbath, had no church and no steady preaching ; but now the Redeemer has set up his standard here, and many seem to be gathering around it. In Benson, the work of divine grace has been great, extensive, and powerful. About 150 added, as we hope, to the Lord since last August. In Orwell there have been a few drops of the heavenly shower ; also in Fair-Haven, West-Haven, Hampton, Poultney, Brandon, and Hubbardston. In Rutland,

Rutland, under Rev. Mr. Haynes, about 140 have been hopefully gathered into the fold of Christ, within a year and an half; and as many in Pittsford, under the Rev. Mr. Harwood. There has been a great work in Dorset, under the Rev. Mr. Jackson. How many have been added to the church, I do not exactly know, but I think not less than a hundred. There is now a very powerful out-pouring of the Divine Spirit in Rupert. Next week, on Wednesday, is to be a general meeting at Rupert. Should the weather be good, it is expected there will be a very great concourse of people. This meeting will last two days; in which it is expected five or six sermons will be preached, beside other pertinent exercises. It is expected that there will be another general meeting in the fall, not far from this. I attended last week at Cornwall a confederation of churches and an association of ministers, which lasted two days.

"There were between 20 and 30 ministers present. It was a most agreeable meeting. There appears to be a heavenly union among the ministers; all appear united in the cause of their divine Saviour. They seem to unite in their faith, in their prayers, and in their exertions to advance the interest of the Redeemer, by the diffusion of Christian knowledge and vital piety."

TO ELIHU PALMER,

PRESIDENT OF THE DEISTICAL SOCIETY IN NEW-YORK.

My dear Sir,

LONG have I viewed with grief the state of your mind; long have I been solicitous that you might see and receive the *truth*. Nothing has prevented my writing to you, but a strong conviction, that I could say nothing equal to the many defences of revelation already written. One argument, however, is seldom urged according to its great importance. I mean the *necessity* of revelation for the existence of a rational religious worship in the world.

Have you duly considered, my friend, what mankind would be as to religious worship, were there no revelation? We may amuse ourselves by speculations respecting a rational, philosophic religion; but facts alone will satisfy a humble man, who wisely reflects on the infinite importance of religious truth.

Those portions of the world, not blessed with revelation, are not wanting in genius, refinement, the cultivation of the arts, or any civil advantages; but where can a single instance of rational worship be found among them? If there be no such instance,

stance, as there certainly is not, then all the rational worship now in the world is the happy effect of revelation ; and that man, who opposes revelation, must be equally hostile to rational piety.

Let us for a few minutes amuse, or rather instruct ourselves by rambling over the globe, and examining a number of those forms of worship not dictated by revelation. We will familiarly enter the hut of the savage, recline on the sofa of refinement, or listen in the academies of science, as they promiscuously fall in our way.

If we take passage for China, what are the convictions, which instantly force themselves on our minds ? This empire, constituting a considerable portion of the world, the population being three hundred and thirty-three million souls, is sunk into paganism, gross paganism. Yes, such is the religion of this learned, this refined people, who have carried some of the useful arts to the highest perfection. They are in the lowest state of moral degradation. God must *reveal* himself to them, or forever remain the *unknown God*. " Every person, from the meanest peasant to the monarch himself, has an altar and a deity of his own." In their temples idols are placed, before whom the people fall in adoration, wringing their hands, and beating their foreheads against the ground.

In Cochin China they worship the spirits of departed men, whose images are placed in their temples.

The Guebres or Gaurs in Persia worship fire. A combustible ground near Baku, a city on the northern border of the empire, is the principal scene of their devotions.

The worship, which the Tartars pay their Lamas, is a satire on every claim of man to a reasonable, natural religion. The Thibetians and all the wandering Tartars from the Wolga to the Corea, a distance of several thousand miles, worship the Grand Lama, who is sometimes an infant, as the vicegerent of God. The more remote tribes worship him as God himself. They believe him immortal, omniscient, and perfect in virtue.

In Curdistan, which was anciently Assyria, the people pay great respect to the devil, because they believe he can do them harm.

The people of Aracan, the capital of which country contains a hundred thousand inhabitants, worship images made of clay baked in the sun.

The Koriacs, a nation tributary to Russia, believe in God, but they neither fear him, nor pray to him. To pacify the prince of *evil* they offer sacrifices of animals, and the first fruits of their hunting and fishing. They also worship him by drunkenness ; this vice is the basis of all their religious solemnities. In Japan they worship *men*, who lived thousands of years ago.

Such

Such is Asia ; let us pass into Africa. The darkness here is not less dismal. In the south we find a people distinguished for their industry and the arts of agriculture ; but they never pray ; they have no religious ceremonies. In Dahomy their religion is a jumble of superstitious ceremonies ; it is paganism in its most stupid form. The Agows, who reside near the head of the Nile, pay divine honours to the river. Near its source now lie the bones of thousands of cattle sacrificed to the spirit of the stream. They style the river, "most high God, Saviour of the world, God of peace, Father of the universe." To him they direct their prayers.

The inhabitants on the gold coast have *each* of them a small substance or ornament called a fetich, to which they address their prayers as mediators ; while near the Cape of Mesurado they offer prayers to Satan, that he may turn away the evils of life.

But we forgot to explore the savage forests of our own country, never enlightened with the beams of revelation. Travel to the north. There you see the Knisteneaux tribe with a domestic god in each hut. It is a carved image, about 8 inches long, which they treat with the most superstitious veneration. At their funerals the mourners cut off their hair, lacerate their flesh, blacken their faces, bury the most valuable property of the deceased, destroy what remains, and women sometimes sacrifice themselves with their departed husbands.

In most of the tribes their conjurors pretend to converse with spirits ; but of futurity they seem to have no just ideas. Some of them believe the northern lights to be the spirits of their deceased friends. When they are bright and dart rapidly in different directions, they say their friends are merry. If we turn to the south, their religion wears a still more horrid aspect. Lest I be tedious I will confine myself to Mexico and the neighbouring regions. When the Spaniards subdued those countries, their religion was terrible beyond description. A spectator solemnly declares, that in one place he saw more than a hundred thousand human skeletons, the relics of those, who had been offered in sacrifice ; yes, saith he, I *repeat* it, I am sure there were *more* than a hundred thousand ; they were so arranged, they could be counted with ease and certainty. In another part of the square, the same person says, human bones were heaped up in such quantities *they could not be counted*. In sacrificing the victim the body was opened while living, the heart and blood were offered to the gods, the limbs, and head furnished a repast for those who made the offering ; the bodies were given to wild beasts, and the skulls hung up in the temple. Their deities were huge, monstrous figures, covered with the representations of serpents and devils. Such, my friend, is a transient view of the religious worship in those parts of the world,

world, not blest with revelation. Does the rational, philosophic mind find any thing to approve? Should you recollect that in some nations called christian, their worship is little better, you will instantly acknowledge, that this is not revelation, this is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. Revelation teaches not idolatry of any kind. Revelation is not responsible for the idolatries of the Roman and Greek churches. I would persuade you to the *pure gospel*, the worship of God *in spirit and truth*.

If time would permit, I would show you that the morals of the heathen are as dreadful as their worship. I would show you the palace in Dahomy covered with human skulls; we would attend the coronation of the king, and see him walk in blood from the palace to the throne; we would once attend the annual ceremony of his watering the graves of his ancestors with the sacrifice of human blood: But in Darfoor we should turn away with horror from the creatures, who form the most intimate connexion with their sisters. When among the Galla, we should tremble in the storm with double terror to see them bend their bows against heaven, and hear them curse the thunder and lightning. They drink the blood of their enemies from cups made of human skulls. When near Juanpore, we would turn aside to see a people, who destroy their female infants, excepting one in each village. One village alone preserve all their female children. From these and intermarriages with other districts the race is preserved. In Madagascar we might see them destroy all their infants, who have any natural blemish, or are born on their unlucky days. I do not ask you to compare these customs with any, which are adapted among real Christians. We are stricken with horror at pagan worship and pagan morals. We cannot soften the view by saying, all these are tribes and nations sunk in barbarism. No; we have also visited nations distinguished for the arts and sciences. The learned Greeks and Romans were not less abominable than modern pagans. Their drunkenness and debaucheries were parts of their worship. Nothing better than what we have seen can be found among the heathen. The people of Otaheite have been praised as models of human excellence, but their sacred places are covered with the skulls of those persons, who have been offered in sacrifice; whole tribes have risen, and rushed to a furious battle for the possession of a deity, which consisted of a small piece of wood wrapped in cloth. Such is the religion of pagan islanders. The Sandwich islands worship their deities by offering human sacrifices. The New-Zealanders eat the human victims, they have offered in sacrifice; the bodies of the enemies they have slain, warm with life, they broil, tear in pieces, and devour. The inhabitants of the Pe-
lew

few islands are considered as the most amiable of the human race; but they have no *kind* of worship, no *form* of religion.

From these well known facts, is it not evident, my friend, that there is a necessity of a revelation from God to teach men a *rational worship*? Could this duty have been discovered by reason, would the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the modern inhabitants of China and Japan, have sunk into such gross errors?

Is there any just cause to hesitate? Is it possible to reject the benign, luminous gospel of Jesus Christ? Blame not the gospel, but wicked professors; be disgusted, my friend, with the crimes of hypocrites, but embrace the sincere disciples of the holy Nazarene; reject the errors of ignorant, and vain pretenders, but embrace the truth of God's word, as the messenger of eternal life; follow its directions as the lamp of heaven. Let the necessity of a revelation compel your assent, and extort your warmest love to the sacred oracles; then will you rejoice with the felicity of a redeemed captive, and enjoy the transports of a heavenly life.

EUSEBIUS.

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES, &c.

Written by the Subject.

THE first of any thing that I remember about moral subjects, is my having some feeble apprehensions of future punishment, though I had no very plain idea of sin. And being taught from my primer that there is a God, and that we must all die and go to him, it became a confirmed opinion with me, that when I died I must appear before him, and be reckoned with some way or other.

It was customary in my father's family to have the Assembly's Catechism taught every Sabbath evening; which, as I remember, was always a weariness to me, and the gravity of my father in this performance, and his conversation on the subject, led me (in my blinded situation) to think very unfavourably of a religious life: and as I grew older I found my disinclination to religion grew stronger, and I often wished, and wondered why my father would not let me enjoy my own opinion, especially, seeing it was so gratifying to me and did him no injury. The first serious impressions of mind that I remember to have had, were occasioned by an expression in my father's prayer, which often troubled me, and led my mind into futurity. I thought him talking to one who would come here sometime or other,

other, and would make us go where he was, and would be angry with me if I was not found of him to be a certain description of character that was agreeable to him.

From this time, which was probably in my *sixth* or *seventh* year, I pretty generally concluded that I was a rebel against God, and that when I died I must appear before him. The more I thought on this subject, and the more according to truth my views were, the more I was alarmed. I strove frequently to banish the idea, but could never get wholly rid of it. "You may *seek* happiness (said conscience) in all the profits and pleasures of this life, and may walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know, that for all these things God will bring you into judgment." This would often cut me to the heart to think that all my comforts must be blasted so soon, and especially that I must soon go and be judged by one that I dreaded, and counted my enemy. Thus I laboured along till I was about 12, when the feelings above related were freshened by some Ministers who occasionally preached in the town; and I then set out in good earnest (as I thought) to be religious. I thought if I went to meeting, cried, and strove ardently, I should be able, in a short time, to overcome my disinclination to religion, and be in a fair way for heaven; but by an expression from one of those preachers, I was quite cut off from that plan. He said, "When you set out in religion, you must begin *square* with God. God will not accept of *outside* obedience. He looks at the heart."

After my opportunities ceased of hearing those preachers, my concern abated, and I soon became very indifferent about my eternal welfare, and at length got so bold as to use profane language with little remorse; though in a reflecting hour I often felt pinched, and sometimes wished myself a beast, to avoid future punishment. And the thoughts of eternal existence, even in heaven, were very undesirable to me, if it must be connected with absolute dependence on God.

Soon after this I became like a thorny-ground hearer; for I forgot all these impressions, and, for a considerable time, thought but little of my eternal state. But when I was in my sixteenth year I went abroad to live, soon after which, by becoming very lame, I had opportunity for reading and religious contemplation. I read "The Select Sentences of John Mason," and "Mason on Self-knowledge." The reading of these books so excited my attention to religion, and alarmed my fears, that I again set out in good earnest to be religious. I used to pray often, and sometimes to be quite affected, so that I very soon entertained strong hopes that my sins *were* pardoned; *justification* was my main object, for all this time I sought more to be saved from *punishment* than to be saved from *sin*. One day, as I

remember, after I had been at prayer, I felt all my fears vanish, and my distress at being in an unpardoned state immediately fled. I thought I had received converting grace—went on singing—every thing looked beautiful—I felt happy, and thought I never should be in trouble again. When I went home that evening, I told my landlady, who I believe was pious, that I hoped I had seen the “plague of my heart” that day; but upon her asking me a question or two, which I could not answer, I was confounded and thought I had been deceiving myself; for, (thought I) if she knows the language of Canaan, and I am what I have pretended, our witness would agree together, for I had always understood that all real Christians felt alike. I entertained *hopes* however, for a while, that something saving was wrought in me; until one day, when I heard a man, whom I thought very correct in religious sentiment, tell another, that those who do *really see their own hearts as they are*, will see themselves to be the worst of any living. This I applied to myself; and being conscious that I never saw myself thus, gave up all hope that my state was good.

Hereupon I strangely declined in great indifferency about my eternal welfare; and thus continued for about a year, when I became very ill, and was obliged to leave my business and return to my father's house. Here I had many flattering prospects and temptations to incline me, if possible, to be more neglectful about my eternal state. In the latter end of the year 1791, and in the year 1792, by the instrumentality of good preaching, I was very much alarmed about my eternal state, or the future welfare of my soul, so that I was scarcely capable of labour, and often could not sleep. Here I set myself to work more earnestly than ever, to patch up something that might look like acceptable obedience in the sight of God! And before long, I imagined I had gained the point. I thought if whatever I did was done with the full approbation of my own mind, that *that* would be right, and God would be pleased with my conscientiousness. I felt disposed to do many acts of great self-denial, and perform many religious duties, if God would only assure me that I should not be punished. And I hoped for a while that I *was* in a *safe* state. It was not long, however, before I was obliged to give up all hope that I should be saved, unless I relinquished some more of my darling objects. The preacher above alluded to often made this remark, “Whatever you love best, is your God; and to set your supreme affection on any thing besides the true God, is idolatry; and *idolaters* are among those, who we are told shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” This reasoning, coming at a time when I saw my exposedness to divine wrath so plainly, and when I as plainly felt my supreme affection to be placed on
some

some worldly object, drove me to my wit's end. I saw it to be reasonable to love God with all the heart; I knew I had never done it, and therefore stood justly exposed to the penalty of his holy law.

From this time I felt my way hedged up and knew not which way to turn. I dared not appeal to the *justice* of God, for the law pointed at me in every direction. Neither dared I to presume on God's *mercy*, for I saw that he had too much regard to his justice, to pardon sinners for nothing. I saw, indeed, that a way of salvation was provided by the mediation of Christ; but then the conditions were such as I did not like. To give myself up unreservedly into God's hands, before I knew whether he would save me or not, (for I understood all were not to be saved) was more than my proud heart would submit to. I told one of my comrades one day, that I plainly saw that eternal salvation was freely offered in the gospel, and that any one might have it for accepting; but, said I, "I will not have salvation in this way! To give up all for lost, and throw myself upon God, to save me or cast me off forever, as he sees fit, without having any choice of my own, is what I never will submit to as long as I can help it!" O the goodness of a holy, sovereign God, who did not see fit to give me up, from that time, to judicial hardness! I continued in great anxiety and distress of mind for a considerable time after this; sometimes reflecting hard upon God for bringing me into existence, and determining to dispose of me according to his sovereign pleasure: and used to say to myself, "If God has a mind to save me, he may save me, and if not, he may cast me off, I have done all that is in my power, I shall do no more. If he save me it is well, and if he do not, he knows I cannot help it. I will take what comfort I can, while I live, and make myself easy, for I can but be damned at last." But then that *dreadful* consideration drank up all my spirits: and such texts as these stared me continually in the face. "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? The wicked shall be turned into hell—where they shall be punished with everlasting destruction. Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood: the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."

Then

Then I used to conclude, that after a few more sorrowful years have rolled away, and perhaps a few days or hours, I should be banished to the regions of eternal exile, and there made to *feel* the weight of that justice that I had provoked. Thus, alarming fears, and awful apprehensions of the day of judgment, pursued my trembling soul from day to day. Some time after this, about the middle of January, 1793, as I was attending family worship, with very sensible exercises of opposition to God, and feeling my heart stubborn and hard against the acknowledgments of the minister who was praying; as he used these words, "Take away the stony hearts out of our flesh, and give us hearts of flesh," I thought I felt an ardent desire that his prayer might then be granted. Immediately upon this I saw the abominable nature of my heart, and felt as sensible enmity against it, as I had felt before against the conditions of salvation. I turned my attention then to the continuation of the prayer, and felt astonished that every word seemed exactly adapted to my case, and especially, that the expressions seemed to correspond with my wishes. I wondered where my understanding had been, that *prayer* never seemed to me before as it did now. I was then relieved of my distress, but was still anxious to know what all this might mean.

On retiring to bed, I ruminated over my case, but had not, as I remember, any hopes that I was regenerated, nor did I feel very anxious about that particular, but was rather taken up in admiring religion, and the goodness and fairness of God. When I awoke in the morning, I found my feelings similar to those I had when I went to sleep. I thought the matter over with astonishment, that I did not feel afraid of punishment, as I did before. I queried, What security have I *now* more than ever I had, that I shall not perish forever? I could not answer that I had *any*, but I felt easy and happy, for God looked good, and lovely; it seemed impossible he should injure any body, and I felt willing to trust myself in his hands. I thought that day if God would only grant me such feelings as I had then I should be happy, whether I was saved or lost; for the contemplation of his character and works was so happy-fying, that I did not see how any person that was privileged with loving him, could be miserable, in any situation whatever. These feelings were so different from what I had laid out in my mind as constituting conversion, that I felt loath to think I was right; and yet there seemed to be a coincidence between what the Bible required and what I felt. All I wanted was to praise God. I thought whether I was saved or not I would love him, and could say with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." O, I thought, how lovely is such a submissive temper, if one could always feel it.

After

After this I was variously exercised ; sometimes I was so depressed at the sight of so much sin remaining in me, that my burden was almost insupportable, and I was almost persuaded to give up all hope that a work of sanctification was begun in my heart: at other times divine consolation seemed to be poured into my soul, so that I could not doubt, but entertained a strong hope that I had really passed from death to life, and had the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost. I had, from time to time, affecting views of the deplorable situation of sinners, and felt so ardently for their salvation, that I could scarcely forbear speaking to them about religion, wherever I met them. I wondered why they did not feel the importance of making their peace with God, and give up every other object to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; and that, why, *even of their own selves*, they could not judge what was right." Luke xii. 57.

About this time I joined a religious society for the purpose of conference and prayer, which I attended weekly, with great satisfaction ; and especially to sit and hear persons relate the feelings of their hearts, how they were *constrained* to submit to the soul-humblng doctrines of the cross of Christ.

In the beginning of 1795, I began to keep a diary, wherein I noted particularly my religious exercises, in order that I might see, from time to time, whether my feelings corresponded with the requirements of the Bible. In the course of this year I offered myself to be a member of a Church that was gathered in the place about the same time ; but, although I had satisfactory evidence at that time of my good estate, yet it has always been a matter of astonishment to me, that so judicious a council as sat on that occasion, should receive any person into a Church, that gave no more evidence of vital piety than could be collected from what I communicated at that time. And here, however assuming it may seem, I beg leave to suggest to Ministers and Churches, the propriety of examining candidates for church membership *thoroughly*, and not to depend on the testimony of others, but to be satisfied *for themselves*, that every individual they receive is in a state of grace. After I became a church member, and had occasion to attend upon special ordinances, I found myself very far from possessing gospel qualifications for them ; and I often wondered at myself for daring to be a partaker of the "Lord's table." At other times I thought I could see the end of the thing signified by the broken body and shed blood of Christ, and how it was that any of the services of poor sinful creatures became acceptable in the sight of a holy God. In my Journal, under August 6, 1797, I find the following : "I had a remarkable view this night of the glorious

glorious way of life and salvation by a blessed Redeemer. How evidently it appears that all the comfort I enjoy, and all the favours I receive, are purchased at no less expence than the blood, the precious blood of the Divine Redeemer. O where is my gratitude, where is my humility, where is my self-abasement for my sins, when I consider that my blessed Lord gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair—that he bore my sins in his own body on the tree, and by *his stripes* I am healed! O the astonishing grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ! Praise him, O my soul; sing praises unto his name. Glory, glory, glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has thus condescended to purchase eternal salvation and remission of sins for guilty, ill-deserving, hell-deserving creatures. Humble thyself in the dust, O my soul, at the consideration that thy sins were the *murderers* of the Lord of life and glory. O thou Holy Spirit, purify me through thy truth; purge me with hyssop, slay the enmity of my soul, sanctify my heart, let me never, in future, be guilty of those horrid crimes that made my Saviour bleed. Wean my heart, O God, from the world—make me to love thee more and serve thee better: Let my soul follow hard after God. Cut short the reigning power of sin in the world, O God, and let thy kingdom come. O that that glorious day might soon appear, when the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads. And when the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, because the Lord shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting and to everlasting, amen and amen.”

About a month after this, I wrote again, as follows: “This day completes my twenty-fifth year. How little have been my improvements since I had opportunity for them. It seems as if the greatest part of my precious time has run to waste; but still I hope I have reason to bless God that I do not arrive at the age of twenty-five, without satisfactory evidence that my peace is made with God. Blessed be God for present consolation in Christ, and comfort of love. How great a thing it appears to be to have my soul sealed unto the day of redemption, and to be a chosen vessel unto Christ. I pray God that I may ever live in the exercise of humble gratitude, that he has made me see the plague of my heart, and to flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before me. And now I desire, with Nebuchadnezzar, to “praise, and extol, and honour the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”

HYPOCRITE.

I HAVE so much cause for humility, and so much need of it too, that I hope I shall never give quarter to any thing that appears in the shape of self-consequence hereafter. Alas! if my best Friend, who laid down his life for me, were to remember all the instances in which I have neglected him, and to plead them against me in judgment, where should I hide my guilty head in the day of recompense! The deceitfulness of the natural heart is inconceivable! I know well that I passed among my friends for a person at least religiously inclined, if not actually religious; and what is more wonderful, I thought myself a Christian, when I had no faith in Christ, when I saw no beauty in him that I should desire him; in short, when I had neither faith nor love, nor any christian grace whatever, but a thousand seeds of rebellion evermore springing up in enmity against him. But blessed be God, even the God who is become my salvation, that he has swept away the refuge of lies! has set my sins in order before me! and in his sovereign mercy discovered me to myself. A new, a dreadful conflict took possession of my soul! and no tongue can describe the anguish of my, I now hope, broken heart. At length the storm being past, a quiet and peaceful serenity of soul succeeded; such as ever attends a lively faith in the all-sufficient atonement, and the sweet sense of mercy and pardon purchased by the blood of Christ. Thus did he break me and bind me up; thus did he wound me, and his hands made me whole."

FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.

EXPLANATION OF PROVERBS xxiii. 7.

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he :—

IT seems to be one of the greatest infelicities of fallen men, that they are prone to pervert truth and righteousness, and to turn that which is designed for their good, into means of their own destruction. The sacred Scriptures are calculated for the benefit of men; and, if rightly improved, would make them wise unto salvation. But by many they are greatly abused, and perverted for the support and propagation of falsehood and delusion. The unlearned, unstable, ignorant, prejudiced, and indolent wrest them to their own destruction.

The words before us have not escaped the perversion of men of corrupt minds; but have been made to speak a language very agreeable to the heart of a slothful and wicked servant. It is

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an opinion too common in the world, and it is frequently said, that if a person really and sincerely think that any thing is right, then it is right to him. That is, if he really and heartily believe any doctrine to be true, then it is true; and if he sincerely think that any practice is right, then it is right to him, and his duty to do it; and of course that he shall hereafter be favourably treated, if he be only sincere and hearty in his opinions and practice. Such an idea is thought by some to be taught and supported by the words under consideration, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he;" that is, if a man sincerely think, that his faith and practice are right and good, then they are so; and that this sincerity will answer all the purposes of truth. This is the construction which some have put upon this inspired sentence. But it is verily thought that this is wresting the Scriptures to support an error of a bad and dangerous tendency. It may therefore be judged necessary to remove this construction of the text, before we attempt what is thought to be the true explanation.

That a thing is true or right merely because a person heartily believes it to be so, is certainly not very plainly taught in these words of Solomon. It does not very well accord with the words themselves, in a detached view, and is evidently repugnant to the connexion, to the Scriptures in general, and to common sense.

Some of the grossest errors and absurdities imaginable appear to be involved in the above construction. If a thing be right, merely because a person may think in his heart that it is right, then it will follow, that truth and error are wholly dependent on a man's own opinions. And since different men may sincerely think differently, and one of them heartily think that to be true, which the other as heartily thinks to be false, it follows, that the same thing may be both true and false at the same time, which is one of the absurdest of all absurdities.

Further; the construction or sentiment we are opposing, implies, that truth and falsehood are of equal importance to mankind; or that a lie heartily believed is as good as the truth; and will as certainly bring a person to heaven at last, as a hearty belief of the truth. A more false and ridiculous notion than this can hardly be suggested.

Another absurdity implicated in the supposition, that what a person heartily believes to be true, is true, is this, that it is impossible for any one to believe a falsehood. For if it were false before he believed it, no sooner does it gain his cordial assent, than it becomes a truth. Whenever he sincerely thinks it to be true, then it is so, and this makes it impossible for any man heartily to believe a lie, which is contrary to fact, reason and common sense.

These

These are some of the many absurdities involved in the sentiment, that what a person believes to be right, is so. The good sense of the reader will doubtless suggest many more.

To every one who considers the subject with any degree of attention and candour, it must be evident, that truth and falsehood, right and wrong, are wholly independent of us, or of any thought or belief of ours. Truth is immutable in its nature, and must necessarily remain forever the same, let our conceptions and belief of things be as they may. Truth lies in the connexions, relations and dependencies of things themselves, and not in our opinions or belief; and therefore when our belief corresponds with the reality of things, it is a true belief, or a belief of the truth; otherwise it is a false belief, or a belief of falsehood. When we conceive of things as they are in themselves, then we see the truth respecting them: but if we view them differently from what they really are, and believe as we see, then we believe a lie. In short, if truth be immutable, consisting in the relations, habitudes, and dependencies of things, it is evident, that our belief cannot alter its nature, or change the connexions of things; and therefore, if we believe contrary to the reality, we believe a lie; and the more hearty this belief is, the more heartily a lie is believed.

That truth and error are of equal importance to mankind, and will bring them to the same end, is a sentiment which, it is presumed, no man in his sober senses will avow. And who will affirm, that it is impossible for a man to believe a falsehood? Solomon says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." This clearly teaches, that a man may believe a falsehood; and that this belief shall bring him down to destruction in the end. And we are assured by an apostle, that they who walk in delusion and believe a lie, shall be damned. Truth and falsehood, therefore, cannot be of equal importance to men. Though they may sincerely and heartily believe a falsehood, yet death and damnation await them at the end of their course. A false belief and practice will inevitably lead down to hell, notwithstanding all our opinions to the contrary.

But it is said, that if we heartily believe a thing to be true, then it is *true to us*. But what is the meaning of this, *true to us*? If it be not true in itself, no belief of ours can make it true, however sincere and strong the belief may be. It cannot, therefore, be true to us, unless it be true in itself.—But, perhaps, by this expression, *true to us*, is meant that we *really think* it is true. That is, if we really think a thing is true, then we really think it is true. This reduces the words of wisdom to the mere tautology and nonsense of a fool. But to take the words *to us*, in the most favourable sense, as meaning that what we believe

in our hearts to be true, will answer all the salutary purposes of truth in respect to us, then this is saying, that truth and falsehood are of equal value, or that a lie heartily believed is as good as the truth, than which a more pernicious position can scarcely be advanced. Can a rational being sincerely believe that a road which leads to a certain place, if pursued, will lead him to a different and opposite place? And can the sincerity of his belief that it will, alter the direction of the road? By no means. Neither can the way of error, which is the way to destruction, though ever so sincerely believed to be right, ever lead a person to heaven.

On the whole, there is scarcely any position more false, absurd and pernicious than this, that a thing is true and right, merely because we may heartily think it is so. It is repugnant to every sober dictate of the human understanding, to common sense, and to scripture, and it argues an unaccountable degree of weakness and infatuation to give it credit. If a sick man, by means of delirium, should think he was well, is he well? If by means of vitiated organs of sense, he should sincerely think that black was white, and white black, are they so? And if by means of the perversion of the understanding and morals, a man should really think in his heart, that good was evil, and evil good, does his belief make them such? It will not be pretended. So neither is a thing true, merely because a person may sincerely think it is. Solomon must have been perfectly infatuated to have taught any such things; and it argues no small degree of infatuation in us to think that he did.

But since the above construction of the words under consideration, cannot be admitted, it is but just and reasonable that we offer an explanation which is thought to be right, or point out their true meaning and import.

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

When these words are viewed in a detached light, or separated from their connexion with the context, their real meaning may not be very obvious to some; and in this unconnected view, they are liable to be misunderstood. But only consider them in their connexion, and all obscurity vanishes, and their true signification is plain and determinate.

In the preceding context Solomon is giving directions for the conduct of a person who is given to appetite, when he is sitting at the table of a ruler, who is supposed to be a close, covetous man. “When thou fittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee, and put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.” That is, consider where you are, and the temptation you are under to act an unbecoming and gluttonous part, and curb your appetite, deny yourself,

yourself, and desire not his dainties ; for they are deceitful meats. He then cautions us not to imitate the covetousness of the ruler, by desiring to be rich, and enforces the caution by suitable considerations. " Labour not to be rich : cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not ? For riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle towards heaven." After this Solomon cautions us against eating, or even desiring to eat, the food of such a selfish, covetous man, who grudges every morsel that is eaten, and is peculiarly hurt in his feelings, if his guests partake freely. " Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats." A covetous churlish man is properly described as having an *evil eye*. He looks with envy upon those who are richer than he, and with ill will at those who obtain any thing of him, without a full compensation, even if it be no more than a piece of bread. An evil eye is a selfish, avaricious eye, which looks grudgingly on every body, and every thing ; or a covetous disposition, which is wounded by every thing which is attended with expense. This is the real character of the man, of whom Solomon is speaking in the words before us.

Nevertheless, such covetous people many times wish to appear differently. Conscious of the honour attached to generosity, they desire to be thought free and generous. The vile person loves to be called liberal, and the churl wishes to be thought bountiful. Hence he will make a show of liberality, and his self-love will even force him to sacrifice something to obtain the name of generosity. And, therefore, he will perhaps make a feast, and invite his friends, neighbours, and acquaintance to partake with him ; and to assume the appearance of a liberal and benevolent man, he will say to his guests, " Eat and drink—Be free—help yourselves—I am glad to see you—you are all welcome." Thus he will outwardly appear to be open-hearted and generous. His words and conduct are the natural expressions of benevolence ; but, at the same time, his heart is quite different from his appearance. His heart still goeth after his covetousness ; and he looks with an evil eye upon what is attended with so much expense. The *cost* of the entertainment wounds his feelings. He pretends to be liberal ; but in heart he is vile. He has the appearance of being bountiful, but in heart he is covetous and churlish. He says and does that which has an open and friendly aspect, but his heart is not in his words and actions. His internal feelings and external deportment are at variance, and he pretends to be what he is not : and hence he acts a hypocritical part.

Now we are not to consider and judge of such a person according to the outward appearance, but according to what he

is in his heart : and that for this very good and sufficient reason, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Though a person's appearance be benevolent and friendly, yet if his heart be covetous, he is a covetous man. His true character is according to the internal feelings or disposition of his heart, and not according to his visible appearance.

This, it is conceived, is the true sense or meaning of the text under consideration, which, it seems, must be very evident to every one who will read it in connexion with the context. "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye ; neither desire thou his dainty meats. For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he. Eat and drink, saith he to thee, but his heart is not with thee."

Hence, the truth, we are taught by Solomon in the words considered, is briefly this, that *it is the heart which characterizes the man*. This construction accords with the very letter of the text. A man *is*, or his true character *is*, just as he thinketh in his heart. If he thinks that which is evil, then he is evil, let the appearance be what it may. And if he thinks in his heart that which is good, then he is good. If he make a feast, and say to his guests, Eat and drink, and his heart be with his words and conduct, then he is a liberal and friendly man. But if he say and do thus, while his heart is not with them ; then he is a vile, covetous person, and deserves not the name nor honour of the benevolent and bountiful.

It is here worthy of notice, that a man may be so extremely ignorant of his own heart, as to imagine, that he really thinks right in his heart, and does things from right views and dispositions, while in fact he does not. His heart may deceive him, and make him think he is right and good, while the fact is, he is altogether filthy, and does nothing that is approveable in the sight of his Maker. But this self deception alters not his true character. His mistake concerning himself does not change the truth respecting him. If the churl sincerely thinks he is bountiful, he is nevertheless a churl still. If a sinner really thinks he is a saint, he is a sinner still. And if a person does that which is wrong, and verily thinks that he is doing right, his mistake does not make it right, but his practice is wicked. It is not imagined sincerity, but *truth in the inward parts*, that constitutes a good man : for his true character is as his heart *is*, and not as he may really imagine it is.

This is a truth of great importance in religion, and well worthy our most serious attention, that it is the heart which characterizes a man, and renders him either good or bad ; righteous or wicked. God looks not on the outward appearance, but upon the heart ; and will judge and reward men, according to what they are in their hearts, and not according to what

what they appear to be, or may imagine they are. The external conduct, or visible appearance, does not, strictly speaking, characterize a man either good or bad. Words and external actions derive all their moral quality from the views and temper of the heart. Separated from these, they are neither virtuous nor vicious. A good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. It is out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. This is an interesting consideration as it respects the nature of good works; and should excite all to the utmost attention and concern, that their hearts be upright with God.

JOSEPHUS.

ADDRESS TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

The following Letter was written by Mrs. SARAH GILL, a Daughter of the Rev. Mr. Prince, and sealed with this order, "Not to be opened till after my death:" and, in compliance with her request, it was not.

To all my young acquaintance, into whose hands these lines may come.

AS from the invisible world, (that world of spirits, into which mine will have entered before this is presented you) I now address you; and I earnestly entreat you to receive my message. I may now say, since I shall be beyond the sensibilities of this mortal life, that it is a disinterested love and concern for your best good, that prompts me to this. With pity have I often thought on your case. Frequently has my heart bled in secret for those of you who live estranged from God, ignorant of the pleasures of the divine life, unacquainted with the lovely Redeemer, with communion with God, the gracious influences of his Spirit, and the tokens of his love and favour! And while I have seen you engaged in a round of amusements and sensual gratifications, the world smiling on you, and you hearkening to its delusive promises, pleasing yourselves with its airy vanities, I have thought you, (as you really are) a company of spirits made and bound for eternity, and speedily hastening to it, and uncertain whether you should be happy in the society of perfected spirits, and in the satisfying presence of God forever, or be miserably fixed in a state of enmity to him, in company with unholy devils: And yet you are diverting on the borders of this eternity, as securely as though you could never enter into it. Let me therefore entreat you, by all the motives proper to sway you, as reasonable, as immortal beings,

beings, to secure your eternal welfare without any delay—till that is done, you are in constant hazard of eternal death : The next hour may be the finishing, the deciding period—can you be easy to stand on the brink of ETERNITY, ready to fall, and not know how your state will be determined at the awful bar of God?—Dare you venture into his presence, whose all-seeing eye penetrates the inmost recesses of your hearts, and not know whether he is your FRIEND or your ALMIGHTY ENEMY? can you think of appearing before him as your JUDGE, and rest till you have secured an interest in him as your SAVIOUR?—Are not your souls precious? Do you really see their importance? If you do not, go visit a dying bed—see what that will teach you; read the word of God, and there you will find the Maker of souls tells you, that they are of more worth than a *whole world*.—But this is not all, consider the value Christ set on them; to save souls, the eternal WORD condescended to veil his glory, to take on him the form of a servant, and in that form to suffer and die. Read the history of his life, his humble state, his hardships and indignities, his painful ignominious death, the agonies of his soul, his bearing the wrath of God, suffering under the immense weight of the divine displeasure. Read his agony in the garden, and on the cross, and all loudly speak the worth of each of your souls.

Would you be happy in life? The ways of vital godliness are indeed pleasant, and the keeping God's commandments brings a peace passing understanding! Would you be fitted to meet death without terror? Come to Christ, and he will take away the sting of it, and it shall be to you a sweet passage-way to glory! Would you be safe for eternity? An interest in Christ will give you such a sure title to eternal life, as nothing can annul!—What pleas shall I use to persuade you to be religious? Shall I tell you *your all* depends upon it; that this is the only way to glorify God, and that you cannot be happy here or hereafter without it? Shall I allure or terrify you? Shall I tell you that heaven with all its joys, that God *himself* must be yours, or you must have hell, with all its amazing terrors, the guilt of sin, the stings of conscience, the wrath of an incensed God, and a slighted Saviour, for your miserable portion to eternity! Can you think of the contrast, and hesitate a moment which to choose!—I speak as from ETERNITY, won't you believe me?—Shall I allure you by the grace of the gospel? Shall I tell you of the amiableness, the transcendent loveliness of the blessed Mediator? That he is altogether glorious in his person, and in his mediatorial character? That he is all sufficient to save you? Shall I assure you he is now *willing* to do it, offers himself with all his benefits to you, and waits your acceptance? If you will accept him, he will be your Almighty Friend, your
satisfying

satisfying portion, your prevalent Intercessor, and he will be all this, *forever*. You shall be filled with love, joy, and peace—Shall see such glories, and feel such happiness, as is beyond the conception of the most raised mind on earth to conceive! This is something of the bliss Christ now offers you! And what answer will you give him? Will you accept or refuse? one or the other you must do. Do you begin to consider? And are you ready to ask, “What methods shall I use to get into the narrow path which leads to life?”——It is, no doubt, your indispensable duty immediately to repent and believe the gospel. Take time for *serious meditation*; let not one day pass without it. Diligently attend all the means of instruction, public, private, and secret. Be much in secret prayer—hear every sermon as for your life, and as though it was the last—Labour to keep eternity in view—Labour to realize the eye of God always on you—these are powerful incentives to diligence.—Associate with the fearers of God—seek for proper companions to whom you may open your cases, and do not be afraid or ashamed to do it.—O do not be ashamed to appear openly or singularly good; bear on your minds that you cannot get to heaven without pains, arduous labours, and persevering strivings. Religion is not the work of a day, nor is it a thing to come in by the bye, but it is the one thing necessary, and must be the chief business of your lives;—you must give God your whole hearts. Do not think you can serve God and sin together—but remember that real religion is a conformity of the soul to God in moral dispositions, and therefore that sin must be forsaken—you must turn from *all sin*, or you will never turn to God. Resolve in a humble dependence on the help of Christ, to delay no longer, but immediately to set about this great work in earnest.

ORDINATION.

WEDNESDAY, June 13, 1804. Mr. James Davis was ordained, at Cornwall, V. an *Anglican*. The Rev. Mr. Marshall made the introductory prayer; the Rev. Mr. Jackson preached from 2 Cor. i. 12. the Rev. Mr. Harwood made the consecrating prayer; the Rev. Job Swift, D. D. gave the charge; the Rev. Mr. Murdock gave the right hand; Rev. Mr. Haynes made the concluding prayer, and gave an exhortation to the people.

ANECDOTE.

A CLERGYMAN was asked why he did not preach on the *political* sentiments of the *times*, as all the rest of his brethren did? He answered, that if all the rest of the brethren preached on *time*, then surely one poor brother might preach an *eternity*.

POETRY.

POETRY.

I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

THOUGH I of sinners am the chief,
 Marks I sustain of Jesus' grief;
 To His my woes some likeness bear,
 And in His sufferings I share.
 Was He in grief forsook by all,
 Contemn'd and scorn'd by great and small?
 I too in silent sadness mourn,
 Revil'd, despis'd, and left alone.
 Did He in poverty appear?
 This is a badge I daily wear.
 Did persecution Him pursue?
 Behold I'm persecuted too.
 Did He for sins on others found
 Receive a deep, a mortal wound?
 In me this mark is also known,
 I smart for follies not my own.
 Was He with sore temptations vex'd?
 With sad suggestions I'm perplex'd.
 His life was one sad scene of wo:
 Mine is a scene of sorrow too.
 But let me sink with conscious shame
 Before the Great, Eternal Name:
 Let me my pride and boasting quell,
 And mourn, while I the difference tell.
 Though Jesus did in sorrows roll,
 Holy and sinless was His soul;
 But I, a wretch, conceiv'd in sin,
 Am all unholy and unclean.
 How did the suffering Saviour shine
 In love and meekness all divine!
 But my impatient, wretched heart
 Is prone at every cross to start.
 What though by others' sins I'm pain'd,
 By me their guilt is not sustain'd:
 But Christ beneath His Father's frown
 Suffer'd for others' sins alone.
 He is Supreme of Heaven and Earth;
 I am a worm, and nothing worth;
 Life for the dead His sufferings bought,
 But mine, alas! can merit naught.
 Like His, such agonizing pain
 No Mortal ever could sustain:
 Then blush, my soul, from hence forbear
 With Christ's afflictions to compare.